

HOLODOMOR IN UKRAINE

(Mr. GROTHMAN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. GROTHMAN. Madam Speaker, tomorrow, we are going to be addressed by the head of state from Ukraine.

I have been talking to people—young people, students, older people—about if they know the background between those countries, specifically the Holodomor, a starvation of the Ukrainian people that took place in 1932 and 1933.

I am shocked. I bet less than 10 percent of Americans know that 4 million—4 to 15 million, but at least 4 million—Ukrainians were starved to death by the Communist government in the early 1930s.

Even less, I am sure, know that for misreporting this starvation, a guy by the name of Walter Duranty, from The New York Times, received a Pulitzer Prize for covering it up. So, this left-wing bias out of The New York Times is not something that started today. They, of course, hated the people who were starved because they were independent farmers, and the Communist Party hates independent, family-oriented people.

UNLOCKING RURAL AMERICA'S POTENTIAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Ms. MANNING). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2021, the gentleman from Washington (Mr. NEWHOUSE) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. NEWHOUSE. Madam Speaker, before I begin, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the topic of my special order.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Washington?

There was no objection.

Mr. NEWHOUSE. Madam Speaker, I hope it is clear to all of my colleagues in this body that rural America faces a myriad of challenges.

Every day, members of the Congressional Western Caucus, of which I am very honored to be chairman, and many partners throughout rural America are working to ensure that local communities across the country are heard in our Nation's Capitol, right here, and that these challenges do not go unaddressed.

For many in big cities and urban areas, I think it can be pretty easy to overlook our rural communities. But we truly are the backbone of our great country, and our challenges are not our challenges alone. Rather, they are reflective of the entire Nation's challenges, things like managing public lands and fulfilling the government's multipurpose-use doctrine, or sup-

porting local economies and encouraging economic development, promoting critical infrastructure like roads and bridges and dams, ensuring a strong agricultural industry that feeds the world, and empowering the communities that we represent to embrace expanded domestic energy production and clean energy technologies.

Our State, local, and private land managers are conservation partners. Small businesses and local communities are eager to take the reins and make the improvements that we need, but they are consistently held back by bureaucratic red tape, delayed permitting processes that add years and millions of dollars in cost to projects, and outdated laws that don't take into account the best available science of modern technologies.

Over and over again, I hear from my constituents in central Washington State, and also from community leaders from across the United States, that we need to get the Federal Government out of the way.

That is why, throughout this month of March, Congressional Western Caucus members are taking the opportunity to highlight why reforming our duplicative and burdensome permitting process is the key to unlocking rural America's potential.

Madam Speaker, broken permitting systems negatively impact the progress that we could be making at nearly every step of the way. The National Environmental Policy Act, or what many refer to as NEPA, is one of the most egregious examples of a well-intentioned law turned into a bureaucratic nightmare for those of us who are working to improve the communities where we live, work, and farm.

The Endangered Species Act is another. This landmark species protection law has become outdated, and it is now used as a weapon by serial litigators and misguided environmentalists, who want nothing more than to sue and settle, wasting our limited government resources, which are stalling projects across the United States and disincentivizing investment in rural America.

Both of these laws play an important role in protecting lands, waters, and wildlife that we cherish throughout the West and across rural America. But because Congress has not been able to meaningfully reform them, they have actually begun to work against us.

ESA regulations can add decades to the permitting processes for forest management projects or projects that would help prevent catastrophic wildfires across the West.

In my own home State of Washington, and across the Pacific Northwest, the policies surrounding the northern spotted owl wreaked havoc on our forest industry, destroying—literally destroying—local economies. Now, our region experiences some of the worst wildfires in our Nation's history.

Madam Speaker, that is not a coincidence. Delays and roadblocks, and I in-

tend to insert a pun there, Madam Speaker, that are caused by NEPA regulations have slowed or completely stopped infrastructure projects like highway improvements or installation of new hydropower technologies that generate clean energy and provide increased fish passage.

Just last week, our members met with former Secretary of the Interior David Bernhardt, who worked within the Trump administration to streamline inefficiencies and cut the environmental review process from 4.5 years, if you can believe that, down to no more than 2.

The Biden administration, of course, is now reversing this progress and bending to politically motivated interest groups at the expense of rural communities.

It is clear to us in the Western Caucus that it is time for Congress to act. For decades, rural America has been kept in regulatory limbo at the mercy of each changing administration.

Congress is a coequal branch of government, and we need to, we should, assert our authority to ensure that our communities have the certainty that they need to move forward on these critical projects.

Our rural communities deserve the investment and the development that is disincentivized by our broken permitting processes.

I know we have Western Caucus members here today who will help shed some light on some of these examples in their home districts, in their States. We will continue to demonstrate the harmful impacts of the status quo and outline our vision for a future that empowers rural Americans to tackle our challenges head-on.

I am very happy to have a group of colleagues here who are very interested in this topic, and I will first turn to Mr. BRUCE WESTERMAN, who is the vice chair of the Western Caucus, one of my vice chairs, but also the ranking member of the House Natural Resources Committee.

I yield to the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. WESTERMAN).

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Mr. WESTERMAN. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding and also for his leadership in the Western Caucus and on these important issues that mean a lot to places like the Fourth District of Arkansas, to all over rural America, where out-of-touch policies in D.C. have a negative impact on people's daily lives, and just being able to earn a living, to pay their taxes, and to provide the goods and services that the rest of the world needs. So I appreciate you hosting this Special Order.

For years, it has been clear to rural America that our Federal permitting and environmental review processes are broken. While well-intentioned, they are doing more harm than good. The current system is complex, burdensome, and ineffective, yet the political